CURRICULUM FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP SPECIALIZATION
KNOWLEDGE AREA MODULE 5
THE CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Introduction

This KAM introduces you to America’s most dynamic and exciting segment of higher education—the contemporary community college. It allows you to examine the environment in which community colleges evolved and now exist in the United States and in other countries. Clearly, community colleges comprise the largest segment of higher education and are as unique as the communities they serve. The literature on the community college (also called junior and technical colleges) establishes major linkages between the development of community colleges to changes in workforce education expectations, access and equity in higher education, the rise of statewide provision for accountability of higher education, and the commensurate growth and diversity in program, purpose, and communities served by these institutions.

The community college movement has come a long way from the days of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when the junior colleges had little status and very little attention from other educational institutions. The development of the community college in response to educational demands of society can be viewed from the same perspective as the development of state universities and land grant colleges that arose to meet changing educational demands. A review of the community college literature will reveal the rich history and diversity of community colleges. There are great variations in the missions, geographical scope, demographics and programs and services among community colleges. In this KAM, you are encouraged to examine the extent to which this variation is greater within community colleges or between them.
Overall Objectives for This KAM

Your scholarship in KAM 5 should allow you to meet the following objectives:

1. Investigate the nature and scope of America’s community colleges, including an analysis of the philosophical and historical forces that led to the development of community colleges and their current role in education.

2. Critically assess current trends, issues, and challenges and relate these factors to your own professional context.

3. Apply theoretical and research findings on the contemporary community college to addressing a current issue or challenge in your professional experience

Plan to accomplish objective #1 in the Breadth component of the KAM, objective #2 in the Depth component, and objective #3 in the Application component. These objectives are further explained with examples in the discussion of each component that follows.

Challenges and Opportunities in This KAM

The contemporary community college can be examined in various ways: the causes and consequences of multiple missions, barriers to sustaining the comprehensive missions, the impact of state and federal policies and mandates, the community college response to changing demographics (faculty, staff, and students), access and equity, community college finance, and the influence of technological changes. Whatever feature of the community college you use for your investigation, you are encouraged to connect the major components so that you can gain a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the importance that community colleges played in the past and will continue to play in higher education.
The Breadth component of this KAM should focus on a rich understanding of the history of the community college movement, its philosophy, and the structures that support community colleges, including legislative actions and funding. A study of the role and function of the modern community college is challenging, for each community college is as unique as the community in which it is located, and scholars of the community college may differ on the purpose and function of these institutions.

Demonstrating understanding is more than simply reporting what the writers say. You need to demonstrate your understanding by using higher levels of thinking such as comparing and contrasting, analyzing, synthesizing, or evaluating them. In the other sections of the KAM, you will be able to relate your knowledge of this foundational understanding to research on some aspect of the community college in your own professional setting.

In the Depth component, you have the opportunity to bring your theoretical understanding to the examination of a particular trend or theme. You will build upon the foundational knowledge that you examined in the Breadth section and critically examine how that influences your professional context and is addressed in different ways by researchers. You will write about these in a way that shows that you know and understand what current researchers have discovered and can apply them to what you want to learn. You will also write to demonstrate that you are able to identify how their research is, or is not, helpful, perceptive, and well grounded, and what gaps remain in our understanding of the contemporary community college.

In the Application component, you will have an opportunity to apply your knowledge to a specific practice issue in your own context. You may design a project of
your own, assess a project you have already completed, or assess the strengths and weaknesses of someone else’s project in terms of what you have gathered from the study of the foundational literature and research examined in the Breadth and Depth sections of this KAM.

Breadth Component

EDUC 8512 Perspectives on the Role of the Community College (5 cr.)

The purpose of the Breadth component of this KAM is to help you develop a deep awareness of the multiple roles of contemporary community colleges. Whether you use Cohen and Brawer’s (2002), Dougherty’s (2001), O’Banion’s (1997) or The Truman Commission Report’s (1947) perspective of the community college, you will need an operational framework to help you understand the role of community colleges in higher education. In the Breadth Component, you will be required to build a broad base of knowledge about the origins and development of community colleges, including philosophical underpinnings and current issues and trends that will shape the future of community colleges. Listed below are some suggestions for the kinds of issues you might want to pursue in the Breadth component of this KAM. They are intended to be suggestive only but will give you an idea of the kinds of topics your paper should address.

1. What are consistent themes (and arguments) concerning the role and function of the contemporary community college?

2. What are the forces that have influenced the community college movement in the United States, and how do those forces compare with similar movements around the globe?
3. With the demand for all types of learning on the rise, contemporary community colleges are struggling to find the appropriate balance between their multiple missions. What is the significance of mission to the community college and what do leading writers say about mission drift?

4. What are significant features of The Learning College movement and how does that movement complement or contrast with other contemporary community college initiatives?

Demonstration of Competence

Using the knowledge resources examined, write a scholarly paper that demonstrates an understanding of the contemporary community college, its history, philosophy, and current role in higher education. The emphasis of the paper is not on summarizing the content of various texts but on a critical assessment of the writings, including comparisons, contrasts, evaluations, and a synthesis of different assumptions, concepts, ideas, and elements encountered during the theoretical literature search and review. The expected length of the paper for the Breadth component is approximately 30 double-spaced pages, plus references.

Learning Resources

A bibliography of possible references for this KAM can be found at the Walden Library site accessed through the faculty or student personal start page/campuscruiser. Once in the Walden Library site, click on Get KAM Research Help and look for the appropriate program or KAM. The Resources links will take you to general references that will provide an overview of the field or key thinkers. The Bibliography link will take you to a list of possible writings. The books and authors listed here are meant only to
provide examples of the kind of literature you should be accessing. You can compile your own bibliographic references using this list as a starting point. If you have difficulty compiling a bibliography or choosing relevant readings, consult with your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden librarians.

Depth Component

EDUC 8522 Current Research on Trends in the Community College (5 cr.)

The purpose of the Depth component is to help you understand and analyze what is currently known about the contemporary community college. Your task in this component is to select a particular influence that has current salience, is of interest to you, and that intersects in intriguing and important ways with your professional context. In the Depth section you might consider the impact of the issues you examined in the Breadth section on some aspects of your role in the contemporary community college. For instance, depending on the focus of the Breadth component, topics that you might consider could include:

1. Research and trends in community college developmental education.
2. Academic transfers: reverse transfer to the community college
3. The community college baccalaureate degree: an emerging trend
4. Career education and adult learners
5. Retention in the community college: first generation learners.
6. The increasing use of technology in the community college–implications for mission and service
7. Community building with local partners and institutional development

_Demonstration of Competence_

Compile an annotated bibliography that includes a minimum of 15 recent refereed or peer-reviewed research journal articles (or older articles if they are a particularly good fit) related to the community college theme that you identified for this assignment. For each source included on your list, prepare a critical analysis. Arrange the bibliography in alphabetical order. Suggested length is 1 to 1½ pages per annotation.

Write a 25-30 page double-spaced typed scholarly paper describing, analyzing, and explaining the selected theme and relating it to the broader community college movement. In this paper, be sure to include evidence of higher order thinking (comparison and contrast, analysis, and evaluation). The total Depth component assignment is equivalent to 5-quarter credit hours of graduate work.

_Learning Resources_

Because the Depth section is so individualized, it is difficult to offer reading recommendations. Both books and articles can be used, although current research is more likely to be found in journal articles. You are encouraged to review a wide range of sources for this assignment but focus particularly on dissertations and journal articles in selecting the sources that will ultimately comprise your bibliographic list.

Consult your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden library staff for further assistance in identifying sources in your literature search.
Application Component

EDUC 8532 Professional Practice and Current Trends in Community College (4 cr.)

In the Application component of the KAM, your focus should now turn to your own professional context – your work in the contemporary community college. In order for the Application component to be the most productive learning experience possible, it is useful for this component to draw on the themes and findings from the Breadth and Depth components of this KAM. You are encouraged to review the resources presented in previous components of this KAM as well as the annotated bibliography compiled as part of the Depth component. In addition to these you are urged to reflect on your own professional practice and firsthand experiences as a community college leader.

Remember to secure Institutional Review Board approval to conduct research using human subjects.

Some suggestions of Application projects you might consider:

1. Propose ways to change, improve and/or expand several key functions (programs, services, etc.) in a contemporary community college.

2. Identify and analyze three critical issues impacting the multiple missions of your local community college. Suggest research-based solutions for addressing this issue.

3. Define and explain the significant roles of key constituent groups (faculty, administrators, trustees, community members, and students) in the contemporary community college.

4. Identify and critically evaluate several key state and or federal policies or practices impacting your particular community colleges.
5. A major work you have previously completed (e.g., a master’s thesis, curriculum design, or professional project) may demonstrate your ability to apply the theories, concepts, methods, and research findings that are the focus of this KAM. Such a demonstration of your competence may be submitted along with an essay that explains how the project illustrated a particular facet of the community college and your mastery of this domain. In addition, provide a brief rationale for the project and comment on how the situation might have changed since the project was first undertaken and what you might do differently if you were to plan and implement something like this again.

_Demonstration of Competence_

The Application component of the KAM gives you the opportunity to put the theories and research pertaining to the contemporary community college into practice. Community colleges serve the local community in which they are located, so think in terms of developing a project that addresses change in your community. Your final demonstration should include both the project and reflective commentary on it, where you show how it is informed by the theories and research studied in the earlier components of this KAM. The Application is considered equivalent to 4-quarter credit hours of graduate work in a traditional program.

_Learning Resources_

The resources you will use in this component are very specific to your particular project. If a theory or research paper is the foundation of the project, be sure to reference it. If you have difficulty compiling a bibliography or choosing relevant readings, consult with your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden librarians.